

"ADDRESS DELIVERED AT EVERGREEN," JANUARY 15, 1919

BY SIR ARTHUR PEARSON

I regard it as a very great privilege to be enabled to address this large and influential gathering of the citizens of Baltimore, particularly because they are citizens of Baltimore, for Baltimore is a highly favoured city. It has been selected to be the headquarters of the gallant men who have given their sight for the cause for which they and we have had so much at heart, and Baltimore should be particularly proud of that, and also particularly proud of the fact that it possesses citizens of such public spirit as Mrs. Garrett, who has given that beautiful property "Evergreen," for the cause and Colonel Bordley who has given himself.

I have spent some very interesting hours at Evergreen during the last few days, and I know that everything there is being planned in a manner which cannot fail to ensure for the men who are there now and for those who will come there the opportunity of calling the period spent there the best and happiest of their lives. Every possible advantage which can be offered them is to be found there.

Now I want to emphasize the point that to be blind is not so miserable a thing as many people seem to think, for some of you may feel a little bit dubious about it. Most people think that when one loses one's sight one should be miserable and should feel utterly and absolutely discouraged with life. But I claim that that condition should be only a phase of the blind man's experience and but a short phase at that. Most of my blinded soldiers at St. Dunstan's tell me when they leave that the time spent there has been the happiest in their lives. They did not think like that before they came there, but that is their attitude when they leave, and just the same thing I predict is going to happen with these soldiers who are enjoying the hospitality of Evergreen.

Let me tell you something about the gallant men of St. Dunstan's, these splendid men who have learned and are learning to be blind. First I must tell you that St. Dunstan's is a generic term. It does not mean a house; it means an institution in the widest sense of that word. St. Dunstan's is the property of the American financier and philanthropist, Mr.

Otto Kahn. It enjoys the distinction of possessing, with the exception of Buckingham Palace, the most extensive grounds in London; and I have no hesitation in saying that the possession of that house has been of the utmost importance in the great work which we have been able to accomplish for the soldiers who have lost their sight in the war. It has been the foundation of our success. I make bold to say that the foundation of the success achieved by the allies was the British Navy, and I am equally emphatic in saying that the foundation of the success of the work that has been done for the blinded soldiers of the British Imperial Forces was the princely loan of that property to us by Mr. and Mrs. Otto Kahn.

I do not want to talk about myself, but perhaps I may be allowed to say that I lost my sight shortly before the war and not having been used to taking things lying down, I refused to become helpless, for while I hope I possess a few of the Christian virtues, "turning the other cheek," I am frank to say was never one of them.

I cannot help but believe that the moment was a fortunate one, for when the blinded soldier began to appear upon the scene I was near enough to him to know what his feelings were, and I was far enough in advance of him to be able to show him the way along the dark trail which we both had to tread.

The original house of St. Dunstan's is now one of six London establishments, one very large annex holding three hundred men within the grounds, and another close by containing one hundred and sixty men. In all we have accommodation for nearly eight hundred men and the population of St. Dunstan's when I left it just a month ago was seven hundred and four. In addition to this there are one hundred and fifty men in hospital waiting to come to us just as soon as they recover from their injuries.

We have large establishments at seaside resorts and other healthful localities which are used as convalescent homes for fellows who have not fully recovered their health.

Now let me take you on a tour through St. Dunstan's. I planned the whole place to its smallest detail. When entering the house the first thing that will strike your attention is

that the floors look rather unusual, in that they are covered with green carpet, with linoleum pathways running through it, and you will see upon the walls notices telling visitors that they must keep off these pathways, for they are only for the men, who hear each other approaching on them. These linoleum pathways have a great deal to do with the remarkable speed with which the men at St. Dunstan's get accustomed to moving about freely and easily. For that is the only real curse of blindness—the loss of one's independence. It is very difficult at first, for the men to get about with any degree of sureness, but it becomes easier as time goes on. To me, it seemed that one of the most important things was to see that the men of St. Dunstan's should get back their ease of movement as early as possible.

Now, passing through the house into the grounds you will find that there are boards placed before steps and dangerous obstacles and there are handrails in every direction. But don't suppose for one moment that the men cling to these handrails for any considerable time. They do not. You will see them getting about quite well without the use of the handrails.

I remember a rather amusing incident in regard to this. A fellow, a very alert young Grenadier Guardsman, who had been through St. Dunstan's, came up to London one day and called to talk to me about his work. I should have told you that he lived in a little town in the Midlands, called Chesterfield. He presently said, "Do you mind, sir, if I say that I think there is altogether too much of this handrail business about St. Dunstan's. I can get about Chesterfield just as well as anybody else can, and there are no handrails there." He thought for a moment and then added, "Well, come to think of it, I suppose it was those handrails that enabled me to get around Chesterfield so well."

Now, continuing our tour, we will go down the broad central pathway, past the great assembly hall which holds all of the men of St. Dunstan's, and past the Anglican and Roman Catholic chapels, and come to the class rooms. Here you will find a scene of quiet activity. I do not, as a rule, like visitors to come to the class rooms first because it is quiet there, and I am a little disposed to believe that the fact is apt to make people think that there is an atmosphere of gloom about

St. Dunstan's, which is quite the reverse of the truth. I have no hesitation in saying that these seven hundred blinded soldiers are the jolliest community on the planet today. And, when you think of it, these men's happiness means almost everything. It means that they have conquered the grim foe who threatened to destroy spirit as well as sight. It means that they have dragged themselves from the dark morass of despair into which they were slipping, and have set their feet upon the flower spangled turf which leads from the garden of endeavour out into the broad highway of normal life.

In these classrooms you will see a great number of tables at each of which are sitting a man and a woman, a blinded soldier and his teacher. The blinded man is learning to read with his finger tips. It sounds very troublesome, doesn't it? But, really it is not so difficult as it seems. I am pretty sure that if you took an intelligent grown up person who had never had any chance to learn to read with his eyes at all, and placed him in a school where he was taught to read with his eyes he would not learn to read more quickly than one of our fellows does with his fingers. And that reading with the fingers is eventually accomplished just as rapidly as you do it with your eyes. Ninety per cent of the men at St. Dunstan's are able to read, when they leave, just about as quickly as I am talking to you now, and that speed improves with practice. The main disadvantage of reading a book with the fingers is that you are unable to "skip" any part of it.

In the next room you will find a greater amount of noise. You will hear the "click, click, click" of many typewriters, for the blinded soldiers here are learning to write. The handwriting of a blinded man more or less quickly deteriorates and therefore every blinded soldier learns to typewrite, not as an occupation, but simply to aid him the more quickly to recover from the effects of that loss of independence which is so serious a drawback to the loss of sight. Every man, when he has passed a standard of efficiency, is given his own typewriter, and the dozens of letters which I receive daily from all parts of the British empire are proof of the use to which they put their typewriters. Typewriters are very scarce in England now, and one can get a great deal of money for a second-hand machine, and in order to show the store set

upon their machines by the men who have passed out of St. Dunstan's, I will tell you that only one has made any attempt to sell his machine. Before we leave the class room I will tell you of a very interesting feature of the work of St. Dunstan's, and that is the training of men to become shorthand writers. It really does seem impossible, doesn't it, to teach blinded men to write shorthand; but, by means of an adaptation of the Braille system and a very ingenious little machine our blinded soldiers leave St. Dunstan's absolutely guaranteed to write shorthand at a minimum speed of one hundred words a minute. Their typewriting is, of course, perfect, and forty-two of these men are now at work in large business houses throughout the kingdom. They are doing ordinary work and earning ordinary wages, most of them more than they did when they could see. Telephone operating is also taught here, and is an occupation at which our fellows become perfectly expert.

Netting is also taught in this department. It is very popular and it is easy, and that is a great thing. The ease with which men pick it up makes them approach with more confidence the far more difficult tasks which lie before them.

I will turn again for a moment to the typewriting. For a blind man to typewrite is much easier than you might think. Our men use ordinary machines. There is no difference in the keyboard, but the scale is in Braille characters. Most people imagine that it must be very difficult for a blind man to learn to typewrite as do the men themselves but when they come to try it men who have never had an opportunity of handling a typewriter when they could see, find that it is quite easy. As to the speed with which these men pick up the art, I will illustrate this by a little incident. I was going through the lounge one evening, and I heard the rapid clicking of a typewriter. I said, "Who is it?" The man who was operating the machine said, "Booking, sir, writing to my mother." I said, "Why Booking you are going pretty fast, you haven't been here long, have you? Did you ever do any typewriting before?" And he replied, "I have been here five weeks tomorrow, sir, and I've never seen a typewriter."

Now we go from the class rooms, under

the covered way which leads to the workshops, passing the massage classrooms on the right. Massage is the one thing that blind people can do not only as well as, but positively better than people who can see. Mind you, I am talking about really scientific massage, not mere Turkish bath rubbing. The course has to include a good working knowledge of anatomy, physiology and pathology, and the acquisition of the manipulative dexterity which is necessary. I am going to dwell upon the point because I understand that I have in my audience a considerable number of medical men. I believe that massage is taken very much more seriously in England than it is here. It is looked upon there as a really great remedial agency. Before the men leave St. Dunstan's they have to pass the very stiff examinations of the Incorporated Society for Trained Masseurs, as a matter of fact they are the stiffest in the world, and then they spend a year working in Military Hospitals. Sixty four of them are at hospitals now, or have passed through that stage of their experience and have started in private practice. Sir Robert Jones, the famous orthopedist, has for two years had four of them at his world renowned hospital at Alder Hey, Liverpool. One of these men is second in his staff of forty odd masseurs. I asked Sir Roberts Jones some time ago for a testimonial. If I had dictated a letter and sent it to Sir Robert Jones, couched in my own terms, to sign, I would not have dared to put the merits of the blind masseur so strongly as he did. A copy of that letter and of other testimony of equal importance from other prominent medical men is at the disposal of any member of the medical profession who would like to apply to Colonel Bordley for it. And I do hope that when the blind American soldier who is a masseur, appears among you as he will, that the medical profession will give him an opportunity to show that he is eminently qualified to perform this great and necessary work.

In the workshops you will find a great deal going on. I won't stop to describe to you in detail the ordinary occupations that are taught to the men there. There is basket making and mat making and woolworking; various kinds of cobbling, shoe-repairing that is, but I don't suppose that would be greatly to the point here as I understand that most of this work

is done by machinery in America. One of the branches which I think you would find the most curious and interesting of all is the carpentry work. Now again it doesn't seem quite right to suggest that a man without any eyes in his head should make things with sharp carpenter's tools. But they do. Some of them do the heavier work such as making wardrobes and dining room tables, but we do not encourage that much because there is not as much money in it as there is in the lighter work such as the manufacture of ornamental tables, tea trays, photoframes and the like. I shall return to the photo frames when I give you some examples of success in that line later on. This carpentry work is being done completely and well, and as time goes on the men acquire that same speed as a sighted man possesses. There is one peculiarity about the carpenter's shop which impresses visitors as they pass by in the winter evenings as very odd. The work stops at 4:30 but the men are permitted to work an extra hour if they wish, and many of them avail themselves of the opportunity. When the overseers and the people who see are gone the lights are extinguished, then the passersby can often still hear the sound of the hammers, saws and planes busily at work—a thing which always seems to strike these visitors as uncanny.

Poultry farming is another entirely new industry for blind people which has been developed at St. Dunstan's. This too, may seem a very strange occupation to ask a blind man to engage in, and yet if you take a dozen birds of different breeds and turn them into a pen and ask one of our fellows to tell you about them he will pick up one of the fowls and as soon as he has it in his hands he will tell you the breed to which it belongs, and whether it is a good, bad or indifferent specimen of that breed. He knows how to run an incubator and foster mother, and how to truss and fix a bird for table so that it can be placed right in the window of a poulterer's shop. He spends his last few weeks at our own poultry farm in Herfordshire where the large stock of birds which are given to men when they leave are raised. This farm is conducted entirely by one person who can see, and by an ever varying staff of six graduates of St. Dunstan's who are finishing up their course. I had quite an interesting letter the other day from a St. Dunstan's poultry farmer, and as nearly as I can remember it ran like this: "Dear Sir

Arthur, I think you will perhaps be interested in something that happened here the other day. A man living about five miles away has a poultry farm and I heard that his incubator was out of order. Somebody asked me this morning if I could help him, so I just walked over there and put it right for him. Yours truly, James Thompson."

Now let us pass to "Play." But before passing to this subject, let me explain to you the ideal of St. Dunstan's. It is just this—a refusal to accept blindness as anything but a handicap. This means throwing overboard into the middle of the deep blue sea all of the ideas which in the past have been held to be applicable to people who lose their sight. At St. Dunstan's we have nothing to do with that revolting word, "affliction." Tell a man often enough that he is afflicted and he will adopt the proper attitude, to suit the word, mentally and physically. Neither have we anything to do with that dreadful virtue "patient resignation." Nothing whatever to do with it. What a newly blinded man needs is a good kicking fighting spirit. We set normality before us as our ideal and insist upon being like other people. The first thing I say to a blinded soldier in hospital and I usually see him about thirty-six hours after he has been hit, is: "Now old fellow, understand this, you are coming to St. Dunstan's. It is not an institution for the blind. We have no blind people there. All we have there are normal men who cannot see."

And now something about "play." If the blinded soldiers are to attain normality it is as important that they should be encouraged and helped to play as that they should be taught to work. Dancing we are very keen on at St. Dunstan's for many reasons. It teaches blinded men freedom and grace of movement and ease of carriage, and it helps to teach the blinded men to develop that curious sense which comes when one's sight goes, the sense of obstacle. Nothing I think strikes a visitor at St. Dunstan's as more curious than a ball. There is a large ball room at each establishment and on Friday nights an opportunity is given to the men to invite their lady friends to the dance. Visitors often marvel when they see many of these girls dancing with their eyes shut, for the men like to do the steering. Friday night is, "ball night," and Tuesday night is "practice night," or learning night," and a great many ladies, among them profes-

sional teachers of dancing, come on Tuesday nights to teach the blinded soldiers to dance. Our staff of helpers includes five hundred and ninety-five ladies, among whom are Americans. Some do the housework of the place, some take men under their special care, some come to teach music and read to the men, to do all that they can to make their lives pass happily and cheerfully. A splendid body of ladies come regularly to teach Braille. Many of these volunteer teachers have been doing this work for two or three or more years, and they are regular in their attendance, no matter how bad the weather or what other calls they may have upon their time. And this devotion on their part enables us to give the men that great help in their work of possessing an individual teacher.

The blinded soldiers play card games of all sorts with cards on which are invisible Braille markings. In playing Bridge with a blind man the only difference that you would notice would be that you would find that when the "dummy" was laid down upon the table the cards were called over, and as each player played his card he announced it; and I think probably that you would also find that the blind player is not the worst of the lot.

Here I will digress for a moment to tell you something which I think you will find of special interest, and that is that the blinded soldiers find their mentality improved to a very remarkable degree. Most people who can see take themselves as they find themselves and leave it at that; very few people think, those who do are the people who get on in the world. When you lose your sight you have got to think continually, to think about every step that you take, every mouthful that you eat. One has to learn to read again, learn to typewrite, learn everything and in learning one is thinking, thinking, thinking, and that is the reason for the mental improvement which is so marked. Exercise improves the mind just as much as it improves the muscles.

Checkers, dominoes, drafts, and all sorts of indoor games are played as well as card games. A debating society is extremely popular and nearly every man at St. Dunstan's learns some kind of musical instrument, and a few of them with really good voices are going in seriously for singing. One man, the only man who, curiously enough, had never learned to read

or write, has a really fine tenor voice. He has been in training for about two years now and has another year of training before him. I think you will probably hear him on this side of the Atlantic sooner or later.

Outdoor amusements are keenly indulged in.

Now let us suppose we have finished our tour of St. Dunstan's and are resting upon a marble seat half buried in a luxuriant mass of shrubbery, looking out over the grounds. All around you will hear sounds and see sights of a happy athletic activity. There in the distance is a curious white caterpillar winding its way over the green grass. This is twenty or thirty men in their white sweaters and shorts jogging on their way down to the lake—each man with his hand on the shoulder of the man in advance of him and a man who can see in the lead. The Regent's park lake runs into our grounds and we have settled the question as to who shall use it by simply hiring all of the boats. Three times a day that lake is full of blind oarsmen, and numbers of the men who have never handled an oar before have become quite proficient. Over there we see tug of war teams from two of the houses, each trying to pull the other over the line, with blind onlookers from the respective establishments cheering and encouraging their side. Over there is a group of men being marshalled up preparatory to going off to the swimming pool, while on this side a running race is taking place. No creeping along, but speedy running, with a whistle when you cross the line and a breast high rope ten feet beyond to stop you if you happen to be going too fast. Some of the youngsters over there are going in for the more rough and tumble sports, such as sack racing and wrestling; and under the trees you will see fellows in groups strolling about and talking with each other. And, when we get up from our seats, may be you will notice that on the back of it is written these lines:

"The kiss of the sun for pardon,
The song of the bird for mirth,
You are nearer to God in a garden,
Than anywhere else on earth."

And I think you will agree with me that that is very true of the garden of St. Dunstan's.

I should like to say a word to you about the blinded officers. They live with me, and a cheerier, brighter set of fellows I have never met. Their residence is about a mile and a half from St. Dunstan's and they go

there every day to acquire the different things that are taught there. All learn Braille and typewriting and some shorthand for business purposes, some poultry farming for pleasure, some for profit, and many take up carpentry as a hobby, while most of them pursue special courses of study in other directions. They all go to the theatre, and let me tell you a blind man will enjoy the theatre as much as you do. The theatre is also valuable from the educative point of view, it teaches one to distinguish people by their voices, and to discern what is going on by subtle signs which you people who see do not notice. I regard the theatre as a really valuable mentor to the newly blinded man.

The blinded officers have week-end quarters at Brighton on the south coast of England, about fifty miles from London, and they have at their disposal for the summer week-ends a very beautiful house and grounds on one of the most picturesque reaches of the Thames. Here they go in for horseback riding and tandem bicycle riding, rowing, swimming and all sorts of things in which you would never imagine a blind man would interest himself.

I wish I had time to describe to you the plan of the after care treatment at St. Dunstan's. When a man leaves St. Dunstan's he passes under the care of this Department, which you will be interested to learn is run by quite a young officer whose sight was destroyed in the war. He has now a staff of thirteen people under him, and attends to all the complicated detail of looking after the men who, like himself, have lost their sight in the war. This Department confines itself to the men who have graduated from St. Dunstan's. The country is divided into districts in each of which is a social visitor. The men are also visited regularly by experts whose business it is to see that the standard of their work does not deteriorate, for when first working without supervision this is rather apt to happen. As time goes on the necessity for these visits of course lessens. The men are helped over any technical or mechanical difficulty which they may encounter, are provided with their raw material at cost price, and are assisted in the marketing of their goods either locally or at central depots. In short the after care department just about levels up the handicap of blindness and puts our fellows on a par with their sighted competitors.

Now what are the causes of the success of St. Dunstan's? First as I have told you is that refusal to accept blindness as anything more serious than a handicap. Secondly that magnificent courage which carried the men of your country and mine to the victories, that they won over the Hun. "Victory over Blindness" is the motto of St. Dunstan's and the victory which these men are gaining and have gained is a victory more splendidly and more dearly won than the victory which they and their comrades gained on the field of battle. Thirdly, the use of the blind teacher. I am the head blind teacher of St. Dunstan's and I have a very competent staff of blind teachers under me. We also employ blinded soldier-pupil teachers. When a man displays unusual ability I offer him the position of pupil teacher. He is paid a salary and remains in residence with the rest. It is a wonderful inspiration to a newcomer when he finds that he is being assisted by a man who himself was but a short time before blinded on the battle field. I do not care how capable a person who can see may be, or how skilful in ability to instruct, if he had taken hold of that man and had said to him, "do this, do that or do the other thing," the suggestion would have been apt to rouse in the mind of the blinded man the thought, "What in the wide world does he know about it?" And he would be quite right. It is quite a different thing when he finds that his teacher is another blinded soldier. He knows two things, first of all that he is being shown the right way, and secondly, and far more important, too, is the thought, "If that fellow can do it, I can."

I would like to give you a few examples of the success with which these fellows are pursuing their lives. I could give you scores upon scores did time allow.

Let us start with officers: An officer who was a prisoner of war in Germany for three months, and who held before the war a very important position in a large business firm went back to that position, not perhaps very confidently at first, though previous to his going I had told him how easy it would be for him to carry on. He attended at the office in the morning, lunched with the other blinded officers and went in the afternoon to learn things at St. Dunstan's. After eight months he was confirmed in his former position as head of the Colonial department of the firm, and not very long ago that firm's board of

directors entered a very interesting resolution in their minute book. It was to the effect that in the opinion of the Board of Directors the Colonial department was being conducted with greater ability than had been the case before the war. That department was severely hit during the latter part of the war, and it was recently decided to send an emissary to the firm's various branches in different parts of the world, to Australia, New Zealand and the Cape of Good Hope to build up this Colonial trade. The man selected to go on this very important mission was Captain Nobbs, that officer who had been blinded in the war.

Lieutenant Rawson before the war was in his father's large manufacturing business in the Midlands. Shortly after his disablement his father died. Rawson with a brother, continued that business with great success. About a year ago he started on his own initiative entirely a new department, involving processes entirely fresh to the firm and obtained large Government contracts entirely on his own initiative. He filled that department with business and he told me when he was in London the other day, that the work of that department had added very materially to the profits of the firm.

Corporal Pettit, who is a picture framer, has a shop just outside the gates of Harrow school. Almost every schoolboy you know has photos to frame, his mother, his sister, the other fellow's sister, perhaps, and the constant succession of boys gives plenty of business so long as it is properly done. Corporal Pettit who before he was disabled earned six dollars a week as an under game keeper, is now earning a steady average of forty dollars a week.

I mention monetary results not because I am of a particularly money-grabbing disposition, but because money is the standard that the world has set upon accomplishment and I must adopt it likewise.

Sergeant Jackson was a barber and hair dresser, and at St. Dunstan's he learned to make very delightful fancy baskets. When he was leaving I said to him, "I have been thinking about you this morning, Jackson, and I do not see why you should not go back to your old work." And Jackson said, "I don't know either, sir, I believe I could do it perfectly all right if I could only get

some body to trust me to start." Well that was arranged and today that totally blind man is shaving more customers than he did when he could see and he writes me the other day to say that he had not drawn blood yet.

The last instance I will give you of success is a very remarkable one. It is that of Private Wright, a very nice fellow, who was employed by a firm of hot water engineers. We do occasionally have a heated house in England. Wright was the fellow who went through a house and laid it out, one radiator in this room, two in the passage, another one in there, and so on. I wanted him to be a masseur, but he didn't care about that. I suggested shorthand writing, but this did not appeal to him, so I said to him, "What do you think of returning to your old business?" He agreed, so I wrote to the firm and asked one of the partners to come down to see me. We had a talk and he said that they were very much interested in Wright, but they really couldn't see how they could use a blind man in their business. However I got him to promise that Wright should have an opening in an executive capacity. He went through the usual course of instruction at St. Dunstan's and also a course of office management. Also he had read to him the latest books relative to his business, a couple of which came from America. I was particularly anxious that no mistake should be made, as he was the first man to return to his original occupation, so I engaged a very bright, intelligent little girl to be his secretary. The first thing that happened was something that pleased me very much. It was a letter from the firm in which they said that they understood that I was paying Wright's secretary, but as he was already doing work for which in the ordinary way they would engage a secretary they would in future make themselves responsible for that payment. In three months time Wright was conducting all the ordinary correspondence of the firm, and was taking his turn with another employee in showing visitors around the very large show rooms and explaining to them all the latest apparatus that his firm handled. In three months more he was doing something much more wonderful. The fellows who do the work that he used to do now bring their plans in to him and put them on the table before him, run his finger over them and he then calls in his secretary,

dictates the specification for the foreman of the works to follow, orders the raw materials from the wholesalers, and sets the job going. He is receiving nearly three times the salary that he received before he was wounded, and I have a letter from the firm in which they tell me that Wright is a much more valuable man to them than he was before he went to the war or, in their opinion he ever would have been.

I should like to say something about Wright's ability to conduct visitors round the show room. We, none of us, sit down in the dark at St. Dunstan's. I am looking at you people now. We take the greatest pains to visualize everything. We form a distinct mental picture of all the people we meet. It may not be an exactly accurate picture, it may be that if our sight was miraculously restored, and we met some of those people they would appear different, but we have our picture and that is all that matters. Personally I have a clearer idea in my own mind of people I have met since I lost my sight than I have of people I knew before. Folks with good descriptive powers come to St. Dunstan's and describe their surroundings to the men, and other places of interest in London.

And I encourage the fellows to go about as much as possible in strange places. When I first lost my sight I was very chary about this but certain reasons obliged me to go often to a place called Hastings. I had not been there in my life before, but very soon I was much surprised to find that I knew Hastings. And so it is. It is simply a question of making up your mind that you are going to see things. Just as it is with writing and reading and everything else. You see with your brain and the person who loses his eyes can go on seeing just as well as anyone else. I went to the Western Front eighteen months ago, and visited a great many places, including the Vimy Ridge, where half a dozen German shells dropped round me. When I returned I described to the men of St. Dunstan's what I had seen there, and many of the men told me afterwards that they had known some of the places I had described, had lived there for weeks, and that my descriptions were quite accurate.

And now, if I am permitted, and not detaining you too long I will tell you a story

or two about the men of St. Dunstan's, just to give you a better understanding of their cheery brightness.

The first one is about a French Canadian. He had been an expert rifle shot in Canada, and became a sniper at the Front, and a very successful sniper, too, I was told. I asked him one day how many Germans he had accounted for, and he said, "Wiz ze rifle I keel zeventy-zix, but I not only keel zem wiz ze rifle, I keel zem wiz zee bomb, zee bayonet and zee grenade—I jus' keels em."

One of our fellows was in a motor bus one day and the usual dear old lay was there, you know that the kind of old lady I mean. She was very interested in our fellows and eventually said to him, "Well my dear man, and how does it really feel to be a blinded soldier?" To which he quickly answered, "It is a very nice hobby, ma'am, try it."

Another man is one of the characters of St. Dunstan's. Besides losing his sight he has lost his right hand, and all but the little finger of the left. The Drummer, as he is called, is one of the cheeriest fellows imaginable and is practically a member of the staff, for his perennial good humour has a wonderful influence upon new comers who are inclined to be a little down in the mouth. His nickname "Drummer" is of no fanciful origin, for he had been a drummer boy in the Army, and when he was so severely wounded at the age of twenty, had eight years service to his credit. With that one remaining little finger of his, the Drummer naturally reads Braille very well, but also, incredible though it may seem, he can typewrite accurately, and at quite a good rate of speed. I have known him to take a cigarette case out of his pocket, select from it a cigarette and after putting this in his mouth, take out a match box from another pocket, and after placing the box in the crook of his right arm, pick it open, extract a match, which he holds between little finger and palm, and light his cigarette. Also he dresses and undresses himself, and ties his tie in an excellent sailor knot, though to his perpetual annoyance, buttoning his collar defeats him, as I am afraid it always will. Well, the Drummer was out shopping one day, and went into a tobacconists to buy some cigarettes. The assistant who came forward to serve him looked at him with gaping astonishment, and finally blurted out, "Lord did you get

that in the war?" "War," retorted the Drummer, "War, what are you talking about? I got that in a bicycle accident on the Old Kent Road."

A young officer who had been blinded by a bullet which passed behind his eyes, severing the optic nerve, but leaving the eyes quite undamaged, told me one day soon after he had joined us that some friends had invited him to lunch at the Piccadilly Restaurant and asked how he should manage about it. I said, "That will be quite all right. The car will take you, and the chauffeur will show you to the entrance. Once inside the door two strides and you will come to the top of five steps, down these, two more forward strides, and you will find five more steps down. Just beyond these is the hat and coat place, and the attendant there will show you into the lounge where your friends will, of course, find you." Off he went, and all went well until he came to the second lot of steps which I had described to him. He forgot there were five of these and thought there were only three, with the result that he blundered down the last two into the attendant who was standing, waiting to relieve him of his hat and coat. Rather confused, he blurted out "I am sorry for barging into you; you see, I am blind." "Yessir," said the attendant, "I quite see that sir, but I can't let you in here in that condition. I must put you in a taxi and send you home."

Three hundred and fifty of the men of St. Dunstan's have been married since they became blind and a topping lot of girls they have gotten too. Don't suppose they get the old left-overs. I had a letter one day from a lady who said, "I should very much like to marry one of your blinded soldiers, I am I think very suitable as I am strong and healthy, and have a good temper, and domesticated, but am unfortunately very plain." Needless to say there were no takers.

An officer was invited to spend the week-end with some friends who live in the country. When he arrived, he found the spare room which had been intended for his use was still occupied by a guest who should have left that morning, but who had contracted a bad chill. His hostess told him that they had arranged that he should sleep at the Lodge, which was only a very short distance from the house, and where they kept a bedroom and bathroom for the use of visitors. He was

told that the head gardener who lived in the lodge was away at the war, but that his wife would see that everything was comfortable for him. When bedtime came, a servant took the blinded officer down to the lodge. On entering he was greeted by an old lady who explained her presence in these words: "Hearing from my daughter, sir, that you were a blind gentleman, and she being a respectable young married woman, we thought that I, who am old enough to be your mother, had better come along and bathe you."

Though the vast majority of men who have lost their sight in the war are obviously blind, some have eyes which look nearly if not quite normal, and this is apt to lead to rather awkward situations of the kind which I experienced myself one day. I was going by train to the officer's summer week-end quarters at Bourne End. Everyone in the carriage but the passenger opposite me got out at Maidenhead, leaving only Cookham between me and my destination. At Cookham this remaining passenger alighted. Evidently I must have been staring at him without realising that I was doing this, for as he opened the door he said "I hope you will know me if we meet again, sir." I replied, "Well, I am awfully sorry, but am afraid I shan't," to which he retorted as he got out: "Then all I can say is you must have a remarkably poor memory for faces."

Late one evening a blinded sailor arrived at St. Dunstan's. It was after supper-time, so a special little meal was ordered for him and three V. A. D.'s busied themselves in making him at home, and each of them thoughtfully put a generous allowance of salt in the bowl of soup which formed the first part of his meal. He tasted it and said, "Sister, what is this?" "Why," was the reply, "that's soup." "Well, well," said the sailor, "I've been sailing on that stuff for ten years and more and never knew that it was called soup."

Among the successes of St. Dunstan's I should have mentioned to you a remarkable group; I won't say very remarkable, I should say a typical group whom I met in Toronto the other day. Capt. Edward Baker, who went back into the employ of the Hydro Electric Power Co., of Toronto, is the first of the group. I heard from Sir Adam Beck, the president of the company, of how splendidly he was doing. I was a little anxious

about the after-care of Canadians at first, but the Canadian Government has now appointed Baker to look after them. He is advised beforehand of their return, receives them when they reach Canada, sets them up at their jobs, and generally looks after them on a system modelled upon ours at home.

Another blinded Canadian is in the employ of the Imperial Life Insurance Company of Canada, as a canvasser. He told me that last year he earned exactly four times the income that he earned the year before he went to the war.

Another man passed those very difficult massage examinations about which I have told you, with brilliant success. He and his ten comrades were the only blind people among three hundred and twenty contestants, and this blind boy, who had been a ticket collector on the C. P. R. before the war, passed second, with distinction. He is now employed by the Canadian Government to teach massage to sighted as well as blind people.

Another masseur is doing splendidly in private practice. A poultry farmer is also employed by the Canadian Government to teach poultry farming to sighted and blind pupils.

St. Dunstan's may, I think, be regarded as the Alladin of the modern world. You remember how Alladin went through the streets of old Bagdad, offering new lamps for old. So it is with St. Dunstan's. The men come to us with their battered, bent and broken life lamps and are given new ones. These new lamps are kept filled with the oil of contentment, the wick of endeavor is well trimmed and the light from these lamps is illuminating the whole world of the blind. Those blinded Canadian soldiers of Toronto, when they got back to Canada found that very little was being done for the blind. They set about getting people interested and many business men of the highest standing have joined them in forming the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, of which I have the honour to be the Honorary President. The Canadian National Institute for the blind is going to alter the whole situation for the many thousand blind people of the Dominion. Its principal officials, including myself, had a conference of two hours with the principal members of Federal Government last week, and as a result many beneficial things are going to happen. It is very wonderful that these young fellows

who had been trained at St. Dunstan's should have set to work to see that the other blind people of their country were given the same kind of chance for making good as had been offered to them.

I had a very interesting evening at Toronto. It was the opening of a place called Pearson Hall—a very fine house with large grounds which has been fitted up most beautifully by the women of Canada, and is the headquarters of the Canadian Blinded soldiers. That evening a rather strange dinner was given there. Twenty-eight people sat down to dinner—twenty-seven blind hosts—soldiers who had returned to Canada from St. Dunstan's, and one blind guest, myself. These fellows had come from all over Canada to meet me and I have never spent a more delightful evening in my life than I spent in listening to them telling of what they were doing and how they were doing it. That night I went by train to Ottawa, and as I lay in my berth, I thought very long of the dinner at Toronto and of those fellows and of their achievements. I thought of them as they had come into St. Dunstan's blinded and hopeless, and of how they were now competent and normal, and a feeling of intense pride came into my heart and these lines shaped themselves in my brain:

"Who goes there?" cried the sentry.

The sentry who stood at the door.

A wounded Canadian soldier,

Wounded and something more.

Back came the voice of the sentry,

Clear as a silver bell—

"Pass, wounded Canadian soldier,

Pass, all will be well."

"What do you mean?" growled the soldier.

"How can it all be well,

With me who have lost my eyes,

And am suffering the torments of Hell."

He cursed the German bullet,

That had robbed him of his sight,

Hopeless, defiant, helpless,

Afraid of eternal night.

Scarcely a twelve month later,

There came to the self-same door,

That man who had been wounded.

Wounded and something more.

Competent, resolute, cheery,

Happy, alert and bright;

Just a normal human being,

Doing without his sight.

"Who goes there," cried the sentry,

The sentry making his round,

"A happy Canadian soldier,

Competent, homeward bound."

Quick came the voice of the sentry,

Clear as a silver bell—

"Pass, happy Canadian soldier,

Pass, all is well."